

## BIRD NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

By G. B. RAGLESS

UNUSUAL NESTING OF SCARLET  
ROBIN

On October 27, 1952, I found a nest and set of eggs of the Scarlet Robin (*Petroica multicolor*) completely out of character for the species.

The nest was built square on top of that of a Yellow-winged Honeyeater (*Meliornis novae-hollandiae*) and contained a set of three roundish, white eggs. The nests were situated about 5 feet high in a Honeysuckle bush about 2 miles north-east of Myponga. It was a fairly lonely area of semi-cleared land containing honeysuckle and other shrubs among regrowth saplings and burnt-out stringybark in sandy country. Although the nest was dry and had the appearance of being in use, two of the eggs were slightly addled. Both of the nests were typical of the species concerned which are fairly common in the district.

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UNFORTUNATE DEATH OF  
BARN OWL

On September 28, 1952, I found a dead Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) near Marion, the neck of which contained an ordinary house rat. The tail and about a third of the body of the rat was protruding from the beak. Apparently death was caused by choking in attempting to swallow the bulk in one gasp.

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SINGING HONEYEATER IN  
NEAR SOUTH

On December 2, 1953, I observed a Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*) near Seaview, about 2 miles N.E. of McLaren Vale. On January 3, 1954, I saw a bird and nest with a piece of egg underneath having an unusual pale bluish-green background. Locality about 1 mile due West of McLaren Vale at side of road in olive bushes. On January 25 I flushed bird from nest containing two of the usual eggs from the latter area. Nest placed 5 feet high in olive bush and made of grass bound together with a little wool and spider webs lined with very fine plant down.

## MAGPIES AS NEST-DESTROYERS

Several gum trees near my home have hollows used by sparrows and starlings for nesting purposes. On January 20, 1954, I noticed grass, feathers, etc., floating down and upon looking up noted a White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina hypoleuca*) pulling the material from a hollow 30 feet high. While under observation one Magpie moved aside and the destructive work was continued by its mate who had been perched alongside. The sparrows kept up a continuous noisy chatter, but made no effort to interfere.

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"INJURY-FEIGNING" BY WHITE  
PLUMED HONEYEATER

In his list of birds known to feign juvenility or injury (S.A. Orn., vol. XVIII, p. 4), Mr. E. F. Boehm makes no mention of the White Plumed Honeyeater (*Meliphaga penicillata*); but as an instance was observed by me recently a description should be of interest.

On February 15, 1954, while walking under some large olive trees near South Road Estate I was struck by the noisiness of a pair of birds near me. A nest was located overhead and upon drawing the branches down a pair of fully fledged young left and alighted nearby. When I moved towards them a parent bird fluttered to the ground and noisily carried out the "broken-wing" trick. This was repeated several times in various directions. At the same time the noise was increased by about 6 of the species coming into vocal action and being joined by a pair of Noisy Miners (*Myzantha melanocephala*).

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Australian Pratincole (*Stiltia isabella*).— During a recent visit to the National Museum, Melbourne, Mr. W. B. Hitchcock drew my attention to a specimen (Reg. No. B46245) of the Australian Pratincole which was taken at Glenelg, South Australia, by the Hon. W. B. Rounsevell on February 2, 1885.—H. T. Condon.